

### REMARKS

In the last Office Action, the specification was objected to as failing to specify that the handgrips 20, 30 have a single portion that is in direct contact with the bar at a point located substantially at a center of gravity, as recited by the independent claims. Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for the same reason. The Examiner stated that the specification fails to disclose a single mounting point on the grips that is in direct contact with the bar. The Examiner further stated that the disclosure does not teach that a mounting screw is substantially at a center of gravity.

Claims 1, 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,282,652 to Ballas ("Ballas"). The Examiner stated that Ballas discloses a bush cutting machine 11 including a pipe-shaped operation rod 12, a motor 17 mounted to a proximal end of the rod 12, a drive shaft extending through the rod 12 and driven by the motor 17, a cutting tool 14 located at a distal end of the rod 12 and rotated by the drive shaft, a bar 21 mounted at a fixing point between the motor 17 and the cutting tool 14, and right and left handgrips 26, 29 mounted to distal ends of the bar. The Examiner further stated that the handgrips 26, 29 are mounted proximate to a center of gravity of a sum of mass

of the respective handgrips 26, 29 and a portion 22, 23 of the bar 21 which extends between the fixing point and a respective one of the distal ends of the bar 21. In particular, the Examiner pointed out that the handgrips 26, 29 are mounted to the distal ends of each side 22, 23 of the bar 21 and are located closely adjacent to the center of gravity along the support tube 12 of the cutting apparatus 11, so that the center of gravity of the sum of the mass of each side 22, 23 of the bar 21 and its respective handgrip 26, 29 is inherently located to be close to the mounting location of the handgrip 26, 29.

Claims 2, 8, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ballas in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,344,684 to Steere ("Steere"). Steere was cited as disclosing a handgrip 40 including a mounting portion 43 that is in contact with a bar 46 and escape portions that are not in contact with the bar 46.

Claims 5-7, 9, 10 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ballas in view of Steere, and further in view of Higashi. Higashi was cited as disclosing a throttle lever 109 mounted on a handgrip 103 formed of two grip halves 103a, 103b having inner peripheral surfaces forming a mount portion of the handgrip and held in contact with an outer circumferential surface of a bar 102.

Applicants and applicants' undersigned attorney acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 14-17. However, for the reasons stated hereinbelow, applicants respectfully submit that claims of somewhat broader scope are allowable over the prior art of record.

For instance, applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's conclusion that the specification does not support the claimed "single" mounting portion.

In this regard, the Examiner's attention is invited to paragraph [0033] of the specification, wherein it is expressly stated that the grip 20 is mounted to the handle by a lower mounting screw 24 "at the center GL (see Fig. 4) of gravity of the sum mL3 of left mass, to preclude the other remaining portion 26 from being brought into contact with the handle 18." The quoted passage and accompanying Figs. 5A and 5B clearly disclose that the grips 20 and 30 are mounted to the handle by a screw 24 at only a single mounting portion of the handle. The foregoing passage also discloses that the remaining portions of the grips 20, 30 are out of contact with the handle.

As can readily be seen in Figs. 5A and 5B, the "remaining portion" of the grip 20 constitutes virtually the entire grip. Thus, the grip 20 has only a single mounting

portion 25 that mounts the grip 20 to the handle 18. The mounting portion 25 and the screw 24 are located at the claimed center of gravity.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the specification provides sufficient disclosure for the subject matter recited by independent claims 1, 8 and 14 and that the Examiner's objection to the specification and claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, should be withdrawn.

By the present amendment, independent claims 1 and 8 have been amended to further recite only a single mounting portion at which the grips are in direct contact with and fixedly mounted to the handle. The specification has been amended at paragraphs 25 and 26 to more clearly state that the grips 20, 30 are mounted to the handle 18 at only a single mounting portion by a screw 24, as shown in Figs. 5A and 5B.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-13 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record.

Amended independent claims 1 and 8 recite that the handgrips each have only a single mounting portion at which the grips are in direct contact with and fixedly mounted to the handle that is at a point located substantially at a center of gravity of a sum of a mass of the respective handgrip and a mass of a portion of the bar extending between the fixing point and a respective one of the distal ends of the bar.

Claims 1 and 8 further recite that the single mounting portions of the respective handgrips are located at positions of the bar at which vibrations transmitted to the bar from the motor through the operation rod are minimized.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 8 recite handgrips having only a single mounting portion that is in direct contact with and fixedly mounted to a bar substantially at the claimed center of gravity of a sum of the masses of a respective portion of the bar and the respective handgrips.

Claim 8 further recites that the respective handgrips each have plurality of escape portions formed in a remaining portion of the handgrip so as to keep the remaining portion out of contact with the bar to suppress transmission of vibration from the bar to the handgrip.

The Ballas patent discloses a handle assembly 21 comprised of a bar connected to a center of gravity of a vegetation cutting apparatus. However, Ballas does not disclose or suggest handgrips having only a single mounting portion that is in direct contact with and fixedly mounted to the bar located substantially at a center of gravity of a sum of a mass of the respective handgrip and a portion of the bar extending between the fixing point and the distal end of the bar. This can be seen from a cursory examination of Fig. 2 of Ballas, which reveals that the handgrips 26, 29 are mounted

significantly behind a center of gravity of the sum of the masses of the heavy metal bar portions 22, 23 and the lightweight rubber handgrips 26, 29.

In the last Action, the Examiner stated that Ballas "inherently" discloses that the center of gravity of the sum of the mass of each side 22, 23 of the bar 21 and its respective handgrip 26, 29 is "inherently" close to a single mounting portion of the respective handgrip.

However, amended independent claims 1 and 8 require that the handgrips each have only a single mounting portion that is in direct contact with and fixedly mounted to the bar at a point located substantially at a center of gravity of a sum of a mass of the respective handgrip and a mass of a portion of the bar extending between the fixing point and a respective one of the distal ends of the bar. Claims 1 and 8 further require that the mounting portions of the respective handgrips are located at positions of the bar at which vibrations transmitted to the bar from the motor through the operation rod are minimized.

Ballas fails to disclose or suggest any of the foregoing structure recited by amended independent claims 1 and 8.

Neither Steere nor Higashi cures the foregoing defects. Steere discloses handgrips discloses substantially

behind the center of gravity recited in claims 1 and 8. Higashi discloses a bush cutting machine 10 having a pipe-shaped operation rod 15, an engine 13 mounted to a proximal end of the operation rod, a transmission shaft 16 extending through the operation rod 15 and driven by the engine 13, a cutting tool 14 provided at a distal end of the operation rod 15 and rotated by the drive shaft 16, a bar-shaped handle 17 fixed to an arbitrary position of the operation rod 15 between the prime mover 13 and the cutter 14, and a right grip 20 and a left grip 18 mounted to distal ends of the handle 17.

However, Higashi does not disclose or suggest mounting of the handgrips in a position substantially at the claimed center of gravity.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-13 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record and that the anticipatory and obviousness rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion,  
the application is now believed to be in condition for  
allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and  
allowance of the claims are most respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAILING CERTIFICATE

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Signature

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